

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 SAB-01 SAI-01 SAM-01

AEC-11 AID-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00 CIEP-02 COME-00 DODE-00

EB-11 FEA-02 FPC-01 H-03 INR-10 INT-08 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-07 OMB-01 PM-07 RSC-01 SCI-06 SP-03 SS-20 STR-08

TRSE-00 PRS-01 PA-04 USIA-15 ACDA-19 NIC-01 DRC-01

/226 W

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R 011000Z MAY 74

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 950

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USINT DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0279

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, IZ

SUBJECT: JOSEPH KRAFT VISIT

REF: MOSCOW 5842

1. COLUMNIST JOSEPH KRAFT HAD BUSY 48 HOUR VISIT TO BAGHDAD
APRIL 27-28. HE WAS WELL TAKEN CARE OF BY CHIEF PARTY PROPAGANDIST AND ATH-THAWRA EDITOR-IN-CHIEF TARIQ AZIZ. SHORT
STAY APPARENTLY PREVENTED INTERVIEW WITH SADDAM HUSSEIN FOR
WHICH TARIQ AZIZ APOLOGETIC. FOLLOWING ARE PEOPLE KRAFT
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SAW AND COMMENTS HE MADE TO ME:

2. MINISTER OF PETROLEUM SADOUN HAMMADI - A VERY IMPRESSIVE TECHNOCRAT. HOWEVER, IN REVIEWING MAJOR PLANS AND PROJECTS FOR PETROLEUM SECTOR HAMMADI BECAME QUITE DEFENSIVE, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE PREPONDERANCE OF PROJECTS CLEARLY BEING DONE BY WESTERN FIRMS. HAMMADI CLAIMED TO BE VERY PLEASED WITH RECENTLY COMPLETED CZECH REFINERY IN BASRA. (U.S. OIL MEN HAVE TOLD ME INOC VERY UNHAPPY THAT CZECHS FINISHED REFINERY TWO YEARS BEHIND SCHEDULE AND IT IS 1935 VINTAGE.) ON SERVICE CONTRACTS FOR NEW EXPLORATION AREAS, HAMMADI SAID THERE WOULD BE ABSOLUTELY NO DISCRIMINATION AGAINST AMERICAN OIL COMPANIES, INCLUDING MAJORS. IN ADDITION TO 37 MILLION DOLLAR CONTRACT FOR 8 INCH PRODUCTS PIPELINE FROM BAGHDAD TO BASRA SIGNED MARCH 30, HAMMADI SAID RUSSIANS WILL BUILD MOSUL REFINERY. (THIS APPEARS TO CONTRADICT IN PART INFO CONTAINED REFTEL.) HAMMADI REFUSED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS WITH SLIGHTEST POLITICAL CONTENT.

3. FIRST SECRETARY OF ICP AZIZ MOHAMMAD - VERY SERIOUS, THOUGHTFUL MAN, MUCH MORE IMPRESSIVE THAN SYRIAN CP LEADER KHALID BAKHDASH. AZIZ IS KURD AND HE MADE NO EFFORT TO DOWNPLAY SERIOUSNESS OF KURDISH PROBLEM. ON CONTRARY, HE ADMITTED THAT MOST KURDS HAD JOINED BARZANI FORCES. HE ALSO DISCUSSED POLICY DIFFERENCE WITH BAATH OVER ME SETTLEMENT.

4. MINISTER OF STATE OBEIDALLAH BARZANI - AN OBVIOUS PUPPET, WHO IS SURROUNDED BY IRAQI SOLDIERS IN VIRTUALLY EMPTY OFFICE. ONLY INTERESTING COMMENTS WERE ON HIS FATHER WHO HE SAID WAS DICTATROIAL TRIBAL LEADER WHOSE ONLY GOAL WAS TO KEEP FIGHTING FOR HIS DREAM OF KURDISH INDEPENDENCE HOWER UNREALISTIC AND DESTRUCTIVE IT MAY BE FOR KURDISH PEOPLE.

5. TARIQ AZIZ - VERY IMPRESSIVE, SPEAKS EXCELLENT ENGLISH. HE CLAIMED IRAN AND U.S. ARE AIDING BARZANI. WHEN ASKED FOR EVIDENCE HE SAID KURDS HAVE U.S. ARMS SUCH AS ANTI-AIRCRAFT WEAPONS WHICH CAN ONLY BE OBTAINED WITH USG APPROVAL. FURTHERMORE, USG COULD STOP IRAN FROM ASSISTING KURDS IF IT WISHED TO DO SO. HE ALSO ALLEGED THAT IRAN HAD SHOWN INTEREST IN APPROCHEMENT LAST APRIL AND ON FIRST DAY OF

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SECRET MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS IN GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS HAD GONE VERY WELL. THEN JOSEPH SISCO, WHO HAD BEEN IN TEHRAN (FOR COM CONFERENCE) HAD INTERVENED AND IRANIAN POSITION HAD IMMEDIATELY HARDENED.

6. TARIQ AZIZ AND MEMBER OF NATIONAL BAATH LEADERSHIP ABDUL WAHAB KAYYALI (PALESTINIAN MARRIED TO AN AMERICAN) CLAIMED THAT SYRIA AND USSR WORKING CLOSELY TOGETHER AND HAD ALREADY

DECIDED ON DISENGAGEMENT. CURRENT ACTIVITIES OF SECRETARY KISSINGER AND GROMYKO ARE DESIGNED TO SAVE FACE OF USSR AND ASSAD BY MAKING DAMASCUS APPEAR AS CENTER OF WORLD AND SHOW THAT RUSSIANS PLAYING ACTIVE ROLE. WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT DISENGAGEMENT ACCORD MAY BE POSSIBLE, IRAQIS SAW NO POSSIBILITY OF NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT SATISFACTORY TO ARABS. IMPROVEMENT IN IRAQ'S RELATIONS WITH SYRIA IS STILL BEING PURSUED AND HIGH LEVEL PARTY MEETING WAS HELD IN APRIL. PRESIDENT ASAD DID NOT, ACCORDING TO TARIQ AZIZ, STOP IN BAGHDAD ON HIS RETURN FROM MOSCOW.

7. TARIQ AZIZ SAID INCLUSION OF ICP IN NATIONAL FRONT WAS TACTICAL ALLIANCE TO RESOLVE KURDISH PROBLEM SINCE IF ICP NOT WITH BAAATH IT WOULD BE WITH KDP AGAINST BAAATH. IN DISCUSSING REASONS BEHIND LAST JUNE 30 ABORTIVE COUP TARIQ AZIZ ADMITTED ABUSES OF SECRET POLICE AND CLAIMED THINGS ARE MUCH IMPROVED. HE ADMITTED THAT REGIME HAD NOT ENJOYED POPULAR SUPPORT PRIOR TO 1972 BUT SUCCESSES SINCE THEN SUCH AS OIL NATIONALIZATION AND DISPATCH OF IRAQI TROOPS DURING OCTOBER WAR TO SAVE DAMASCUS (SIC) HAVE GIVEN REGIME POPULAR BACKING IT LACKED.

8. COMMENT: DESPITE FACT KRAFT DID NOT SEE SADDAM HUSSEIN, VISIT IS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF IRAQI DESIRE TO IMPROVE THEIR IMAGE AND CULTIVATE INFLUENTIAL AMERICANS. IN ADDITION, THERE IS REAL VALUE IN EXPOSING ISOLATED IRAQIS TO THINKING OF SUCH AMERICANS. PERHAPS AS RESULT OF KRAFT VISIT AND EARLIER ONE BY ROWLAND EVANS, TARIQ AZIZ EXPRESSED SERIOUS INTEREST IN VISITING U.S. I AM EXPLORING BEST WAY TO ENCOURAGE AND FACILITATE VISIT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: JOURNALISTS, VISITS, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BAGHDA00279
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740108-0750
From: BAGHDAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740583/aaaacwtr.tel
Line Count: 145
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: MOSCOW 5842
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 APR 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <14 JAN 2003 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JOSEPH KRAFT VISIT
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, IZ, (AZIZ, TARIQ), (HAMMADI), (AZIZ, MUHAMMED A), (KRAFT, JOSEPH)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005